



## School-Based Outreach Best Practices

Arizona's schools are the best places to reach children and a place parents trust for information. Ideas and strategies are not one-size fits all.

Parents of young children and adolescents may require different approaches. Whether your school adopts a best practice or a new idea, the important thing is to be creative, keep working year after year, class after class, to connect families to affordable healthcare coverage.

### **One-on-one Application Assistance and Getting the Word Out: Parent-to-Parent Outreach**

The Los Angeles Unified School District actively recruits parents to work as outreach and enrollment staff for Medicaid and SCHIP, training them to educate other parents about children's health insurance programs and to help families enroll in these programs at school sites. Experience has shown that parents who are interested in getting information about health insurance feel more comfortable coming to an outreach worker who is also a parent and understands their situation.

Parents who are conducting outreach can also gain job skills, feel a sense of accomplishment, and have an increased connection to their children's education.

### **Peer-Oriented Outreach: Teens Reaching Teens**

Because adolescents were one of the most under-enrolled populations in California, the Richmond High School initiated a peer-oriented outreach project. The project involved youth educating other youth about health insurance options for children and referring them to application specialists where they can receive help with enrollment. Peer Outreach participants gave classroom presentations and worked at community events to spread the word about options for children's health insurance. Peers used games and other fun activities to help inform their audiences, such as Jeopardy with questions program eligibility or application requirements and Bingo with health coverage terms.

### **Collaboration Between Free and Reduced Lunch and Medicaid/SCHIP California's "Express Lane for Eligibility"**

This program uses the Free and Reduced Lunch application to efficiently find and enroll eligible uninsured children in Medicaid or SCHIP. Programs linking health insurance enrollment to school lunch programs are possible through data sharing agreements between schools and Medicaid.

To participate in data matching programs, schools may use prototype forms designed by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to obtain parental consent to disclose children's Free or Reduced Lunch eligibility information for the purpose of identifying and enrolling children in Medicaid and SCHIP. The prototypes are available either as a check-box on a multi-use school lunch application or as a separate waiver form that can be attached to the application.

(Source: "Healthy Kids Make Better Learners: A Guide to School-Based Enrollment in State-Sponsored Health Insurance Programs," Consumers Union, 2001)



Affordable Healthcare For Arizona's Children

## Role of School Nurses and Other School Staff

Schools have become the most targeted location to conduct outreach to children for health insurance enrollment throughout the country. Dedicated teachers and staff are working with the community and state and local children's health insurance agencies to help children get enrolled. Although all school staff is vital to outreach in schools, school nurses can play an integral role.



### Louisiana

In Louisiana, school nurses have become involved in SCHIP outreach by giving health insurance enrollment information packets to elementary school-aged

children who are sent home from school due to illness. The packet included information on how to enroll and maintain coverage in the SCHIP program, an SCHIP application, contact information of where to get help with the enrollment process, and a coloring book for the children to use while they waited to be picked up.

### Rhode Island

Schools in Rhode Island have revised mandatory health forms, adding questions about whether or not the student is insured and whether the family is interested in receiving information about health insurance. Examples of forms that have been revised include emergency contact cards, medical release forms, parent handbooks or sports physical forms, making these forms a good tool for outreach and referral. A school nurse or outreach worker follows up with families who are interested in health insurance.

(Source: "Children's Health Coverage Outreach: A Special Role for School Nurses," Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2001)

## Outreach Events in Schools

### Illinois

In a coordinated back-to-school outreach campaign, led by the Governor's office, over 1600 schools participated in a statewide outreach effort. Schools provided families program bookmarks, fact sheets, and application request forms to remind parents to include health insurance as part of their back-to-school "to do" activities. Additionally, there is information about SCHIP and Medicaid in school newsletters, public service announcements and health fairs around the state.



(Source: [www.allkidscovered.com](http://www.allkidscovered.com))

### Virginia

A comprehensive back-to-school outreach campaign continues to be one of the most effective outreach strategies in Virginia. The campaign includes television advertising with an enrolled mom as a spokeswoman. In addition to media, the campaign distributes SCHIP flyers through the schools, conducts a media event with the Governor, coordinates with the Free and Reduced Lunch Program, and participates in events such as health fairs and Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings at the local level.



(Source: [www.famis.org](http://www.famis.org))



## Where to Find More Best Practices

[www.coveringkidsandfamilies.org](http://www.coveringkidsandfamilies.org)  
[www.familiesusa.org](http://www.familiesusa.org)

[www.covertheuninsured.org](http://www.covertheuninsured.org)  
[www.kff.org](http://www.kff.org)